

VZCZCXRO0405  
PP RUEHDBU  
DE RUEHKB #1337/01 3111312  
ZNY CCCCC ZZH  
P 071312Z NOV 07  
FM AMEMBASSY BAKU  
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 4191  
INFO RUCNCIS/CIS COLLECTIVE PRIORITY  
RUEHAK/AMEMBASSY ANKARA PRIORITY 2439  
RUEHGB/AMEMBASSY BAGHDAD PRIORITY 0036  
RHMFISS/CDR USEUCOM VAIHINGEN GE PRIORITY  
RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHDC PRIORITY

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 BAKU 001337

SIPDIS

SIPDIS

FOR EUR/CARC AND EUR/SE

E.O. 12958: DECL: 11/07/2017

TAGS: [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [PTER](#) [TU](#) [IZ](#) [AJ](#)

SUBJECT: AZERBAIJANI PUBLIC AND GOVERNMENT STAND WITH  
TURKEY AGAINST THE PKK

Classified By: Pol/Econ Chief Joan Polaschik for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

¶1. (C) Summary: In the run-up to Turkish President Abdullah Gul's November 6-8 visit to Azerbaijan, GOAJ officials, MPs, opposition party members, and civil society activists voiced support for Turkey in its struggle against the PKK. A November 5 conference in Baku, which included participants from across the political spectrum, called on the Azerbaijan Parliament to recognize the PKK as a terrorist organization. President Aliyev's public statements during Gul's visit and our private conversations with MFA officials suggest the GOAJ support for Turkey will be limited to political gestures, including a possible Parliamentary decision to label the PKK a terrorist organization. End Summary.

Conference Lobbies GOAJ to Label PKK as Terrorist Group  
-----

¶2. (C) On November 5, Leyla Yunus (Director of the Institute of Peace and Democracy) organized a conference on Azerbaijani-Turkish relations and Azerbaijan's support to Turkey in its struggle against the PK. According to Yunus and local press, approximately 150 participants attended. Attendees represented the political spectrum, including pro-government and pro-opposition groups. The conference concluded with a document calling on the Parliament to recognize the PKK as a terrorist organization.

¶3. (C) Commenting on the conference, Yunus told us that the theme of "solidarity with Turkey" binds opposition and government forces. During the conference, young civil society representatives were the most frustrated with what they believed to be the GOAJ's insubstantial support for Ankara against the PKK. Yunus also observed that Azerbaijani society is united around the idea of maintaining close relations with Turkey and the idea of Azerbaijan supporting Turkey in its fight against the PKK.

¶4. (C) Opposition MP Nasib Nasibli gave a speech on Azerbaijani-Turkish during the conference and privately told us there is consensus among opposition and government-leaning politicians that Turkey is a strategic ally for Azerbaijan. Nasibli judged that the Parliament may declare the PKK a terrorist organization, although he had no information about a possible timeline.

GOAJ Offers Public Support  
-----

¶5. (C) During a November 6 press conference with Turkish

President Abdullah Gul, President Aliyev stated that Azerbaijan supports Turkey's steps against the PKK. On the same day, Parliamentary Speaker Oqtay Asadov said the Parliament will issue a statement condemning the PKK. Apart from these public gestures, it is unclear if the GOAJ is willing to offer more tangible support or take the step of formally declaring the PKK as a terrorist organization.

16. (C) MFA First Territorial Department Director Rahman Mustafayev told Pol/Econ Chief that Azerbaijan would offer "political support" to Turkey against the PKK. Mustafayev dismissed recent press reports which speculated that Azerbaijani military units in Naxchivan might offer military support to Turkey against the PKK. Mustafayev emphasized that the GOAJ position was based on Azerbaijan's strong relations with Turkey and the broader importance of combating terrorism.

Comment  
-----

17. (C) We believe the GOAJ's support for Turkey on the PKK issue will be contained to public statements and other political gestures. This issue demonstrates how strongly the chord of Turkish solidarity resonates within Azerbaijani society and across the government-opposition divide. Turkey and Azerbaijan have strong, close relations -- including in the military sphere -- and have recently intensified their efforts to promote pan-Turkic unity on a range of issues.

18. (C) A subtheme of Azerbaijani solidarity with Turkey against the PKK is the periodic accusation that unspecified GOAJ elements may secretly support Kurdish business networks or even the PKK. Analysts who are critical of the government most often make this accusation. While some powerful

BAKU 00001337 002 OF 002

Azerbaijanis are Kurdish or have links to Kurdish business networks, we believe the periodic pro-Kurdish allegations are just one tool that various Azerbaijani political factions employ in their regular efforts to smear rivals in the press.  
DERSE